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ABSTRACT

This paper takes up an issue that is currently being debated in the educational planning literature--the adequacy of the central assumption of rationality in the formulation of public policy planning. It identifies the nature of the rationality that is being called into question and rephrases the debate in terms of the tenability of an assumption of scientific rationality as opposed to human rationality, or the rationality of the social world. The paper gives some indication as to the general nature of a planning model proceeding from this assumption. No quantitative or economic element enters into the discussion, though it is asserted that such elements fall readily into place under the "means" aspect of the human rationality model as it is outlined. It seems that the crux of the debate does not lie in a change of perspective--from rational comprehensive analysis to incremental decision-making or from a rational model to an organizational or political one--rather, it is a matter of attempting to find out what human rationality is all about and realizing that scientific rationality is only one aspect of human rationality. (Author/IRT)

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HOW CAN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING BE RATIONAL? A CONSIDERATION OF THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN TERMS OF THE PROBLEM OF RATIONALITY IN THE SOCIAL WORLD

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Unesco: International Institute for Educational Planning

EA 012 117

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This son of good family,
A wearer of glasses?
Pale, studious, trusting,
But trusting no longer
In power of goodness,
Will do anything, now
For ends justify means,
(So he hopes).

Ah, honest-dishonest!
Now wiping his glasses
To see things more clearly,
He sees no barrels -
No gasoline barrels!
It's an idea he sees -
An Abstract conception -
Until it explodes!

(Chorus describing The Ph. D. in Max Frisch,
The Firebugs1/)

1/ Cited in Beres, R. L. et. al. (ed.) Planning alternative world futures, New York : Praeger, 1975, p. 30.

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of planning is not likely to explode, even though the attempt to defuse it is not unknown! 1/ It does appear, however, that the assumption of rationality which underlies the traditional concept of planning, has become quite problematic.

For example, Benveniste, in his recent discussion of the consequences of excessive educational planning seems to suggest that this central assumption of educational planning - rationalization, or rationality - belongs to one of "yesterday's planning models". According to such a model "the planner is concerned with goal definition and the best, or preferred, means of reaching these goals". Such an approach it seems, was, and apparently still is quite valid for what might be described as the purely technical aspects of educational planning, but is nevertheless one which, for Benveniste, simply fails to account adequately for the organizational aspects of that process 2/. Moreover, Crowson, in his discussion of educational planning and models of decision-making, has endorsed the stance taken by Benveniste. He also maintains that "assumptions of rationality are no longer adequate for the development of educational planning theory", and suggests that not one, but three decision models are basic to the process - the rational model, the organizational process model, and the governmental political model. 3/

As Crowson himself points out, this debate between alternative decision making theories is by no means new! The proponents of those two polar positions - rational comprehensive analysis versus incremental decision-making - have jousted with each other for nearly twenty years in the literature on public policy-making, in fact ever since Lindblom outlined the two positions in his seminar paper on "The science of muddling through". 4/ However, to raise the issue in the context of decision-making in the educational planning process is timely, for, as Farrell notes, this field of study "was early on 'captured' by economists and has been defined largely in, or in reaction to, their terms. 5/ The result has been that perhaps too little attention has been paid to the fact that "educational planning can justify its existence only if it provides useful information to educational administrations. 6/. Hence

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1/ See, for example, Wildavsky, A. If planning is everything, maybe it is nothing, Policy Sciences, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 1973.

2/ Benveniste, G. Consequences of excessive educational planning, Educational planning, Vol. 1 No. 2, October 1974, pp. 1-9

3/ Crowson, R. L., Educational planning and models of decision-making, Educational Planning, Vol. 2 No. 1, May 1975, pp. 57-64.

4/ Lindblom, C. E. The science of muddling through, Public Administration Review, Vol. 19. (Spring 1959) pp. 79-88.

5/ Farrell, J. P. A reaction to the micro-planning of education : why it fails, why it survives, and the alternatives, Comparative education review, Vol. 19 No. 2 June 1975, p. 202.

6/ Windham, D. M. The macro-planning of education : why it fails, why it survives, and the alternatives, Comparative education review, Vol. 19, No. 2, June 1975, p. 197.

there is a good deal of merit in the attempt of both Benveniste and Crowson, to draw the attention of the educational planner away from the matter of the allocation of scarce resources, the economist's special preoccupation, to the organizational and political aspects of the educational planning process. However, there would also appear to be some confusion inherent in this attempt.

In the first place it is by no means clear why both authors should find such disjunction between the rational and organizational models as they have defined them. For Benveniste this disjunction is expressed as an encounter between two completely different systems, "the system we call educational planning (composed of planners' reports, field research, etc) ... (and) .... "the system we call organization or bureaucracy (composed of authority, rules, communication networks, etc.)"1/ while Crowson argues in much the same vein, that the organizational and politics models "proceed from other basic premises", as far as the rational model is concerned. 2/ But if such a disjunction is to stand, then it can only be assumed that the planner himself prepares his plans in some intra- or extra-organizational vacuum. Such, of course, is not the case. The planner's professional behaviour is as susceptible to erosion in a bureaucratic administrative context, as that of the educator for whom the planner may sometimes make too many rules. 2/ Moreover, there is at least one basic premise that the rational model and the bureaucracy have in common, namely that of rationality. Indeed, the organizational process model that both Benveniste and Crowson appear to have in mind, is generally regarded by organizational theorists as the very archetype of administrative rationality! Hence, it could well be, that it is not yesterday's model of planning that is dysfunctional, but yesterday's model of the organization - the bureaucracy - which is an unsuitable administrative context for the educational planning process.

That, however, is not the line of argument that this paper intends to pursue. Rather, prompted by the nature of the issue which both Benveniste and Crowson have raised, namely, "that assumptions of rationality are no longer adequate for the development of educational planning theory", this paper sets out to consider a problem to which neither of these authors has drawn attention, and yet is one which would appear to be of central importance in such a debate - that is, the problem of rationality in the social world, as opposed to scientific rationality. For it may be that it is not rationality per se that these authors are contesting, but rather the assumption of scientific rationality; and that it is not really necessary to invoke numerous other models of decision-making which allegedly "proceed from other basic premises", if it is recognised that there is a rationality that it may be appropriate to assume, in that it does fully recognize the nature of that social reality which the educational planning process is and with which it must deal. To this end, then, this paper first considers briefly the commonsense notion of rational action. It then proposes as the archetype of rational action - scientific rationality, and suggests that it is this scientific rationality which the educational planning process assumes, to the extent that any convential statement of the educational planning process may be regarded, in essence, as a general statement of what is known as "the scientific method". The discussion then focusses on certain assumption about the nature of reality which "the scientific method"

1/ Benveniste, G., op.cit.

2/ Crowson, R.L. op.cit. p.59.

implies. It is suggested that these assumptions are untenable as far as the study of the social world is concerned and hence that the only assumption of rationality that is appropriate to the educational planning process is the rationality of the social world. The methodological imperatives of such an assumption are then discussed, though only one such imperative is considered in any detail. In this manner it is intended at least to initiate some discussion about a problem which in the development of educational planning theory has not yet been considered explicitly, despite the fact that it would appear to be a problem which, if accorded its full significance, has, as far as the concept of educational planning is concerned, not explosive - but rather revolutionary potential.

II. THE NATURE OF RATIONAL ACTION

1. A commonsense view [1]

Sometimes rational action is regarded simply as being reasonable, which may be taken to mean that rational action accords with what experience attests is appropriate. However, it is not too difficult to imagine some situations where the mechanical application of precedent ought rationally to be avoided, and new ways of dealing with the situation be devised. Then again, acting rationally may be interpreted, in the commonsense view, as acting deliberately, that is with some definite end in view, on as Dewey puts it, acting only after "a dramatic rehearsal in the imagination of competing possible courses of action". This understanding of the term emphasizes the element of choice in rational action, and thus would appear to make the rationality of routine action more than a little problematic. For, if the very function of routinizing an operation implies its standardization and mechanization to the point where a conscious decision as to what to do next is really no longer needed, then the deliberate aspect of such an action no longer exists, and the action becomes irrational. Perhaps though, it should be noted in this context, that routine action could still be regarded as rational, if only insofar as the initial action in the routinized sequence does itself involve a deliberate choice, as does indeed the decision to repeat such an action in a routine fashion.

From another point of view rational action may be equated with logical action, which would appear to be the essence of the scientific concept of the rational act as defined by Parsons :

> "Action is rational insofar as it pursues ends possible within the conditions of the situation and by the means which, among those available to the actor, are intrinsically best adapted to the end for reasons understandable and verifiable by positive empirical science. Since science is the rational achievement, par excellence, the mode of approach here outlined (towards a definition of what it is to act rationally) is in terms of the analogy between the scientific investigator and the actor in ordinary practical activities. The starting point is that of conceiving the actor as coming to know the facts of the situation in which he acts and thus the conditions necessary and the means available for the realization of his ends. As applied to the means-ends relationship this is essentially a matter of the accurate prediction of the probable effects of various ways of altering the situation (employment of alternative means) and the resultant choice among them." 2/

1/ The discussion in this section is drawn largely from the work of Alfred Schuetz, a sociologist who addressed himself to the problem of rationality in the social world in the following article : Schuetz, A. "The problem of rationality in the social world", Economica, Vol.X, May, 1943.

2/ Parsons, T. The structure of social action, New York, McGraw Hill, 1937, p.58.

III. SCIENTIFIC RATIONALITY, PLANNING, AND 'THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD'

The similarity between Parsons's definition of the rational act which is scientific, that has just been cited, and the definition of planning offered by the Unesco International Conference on Educational Planning (Paris, 6-14 August 1968) is quite striking. The latter reads: "Educational planning is ... the application to education itself or a rational, scientific approach to examining one's alternatives, choosing wisely among them, then proceeding systematically to implement the choices thus made."1/

And, as is shown by Kim's recent comprehensive review of concepts of the planning process, there is nothing particularly unique about this definition. In fact, as Kim points out, such a definition of educational planning constitutes a mere restatement of the five phases which Dewey detailed several decades ago as the indispensable traits of reflective thinking, namely:

- Defining the problem;
- noting the conditions surrounding the problem;
- formulating the hypotheses for the possible solution of the problem;
- elaborating the probable value of the various hypotheses for solving the problem;
- actively testing the hypotheses to see which idea offers the best solution. 2/

These five phases, though not necessarily to be regarded as falling into a rapid sequence, did, for Dewey3/ constitute a complete act of logical thought.

But this expression of logicality, this procedure of starting with a problem, formulating hypotheses, gathering data, and testing the hypotheses, constitutes also a simple statement of "the scientific method". There has been it is true quite considerable debate as to whether the practising scientist ever goes about his task in quite the fashion that "the method" suggests, but there is at least some consensus as to what such a method should constitute, even if it does not! In summary form then the scientific method is generally regarded as comprising the following elements:

- The examination and wherever possible, systematic measurement of the facts;
- the selection of the important from the incidental;
- the formulation of a theory to fit the facts;
- further work, tests and measurements to establish the theory and to use it as the basis for further action;
- a refusal to be tied down by prejudice, dogma or preconceived ideas... all of which elements are of course to be directed to the solving of some problem.

But there is more than one catch in this approach to problem solving. In the first place it assumes that the real problem can in fact be identified, which is a matter of concern to planners, and has

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1/ Cited in Unesco, Administrative aspects of educational planning, Paris, Unesco/IIEP, 1969.

2/ Kim, J.E. A conceptual framework for the analysis of the national planning process for educational development, in Educational Planning, Vol. 1, No. 4 March 1975, pp. 74-75.

3/ Dewey, J. How we think, (rev. ed.), Lexington, Mass. Heath, 1933; originally published in 1910.

already been recognized as such in the educational planning literature. For example, Rowley1/ does not hesitate to point out that it would be disastrous if educational planners developed plans, or facilitated the implementation of such plans as sought to impart 'instant' solutions to very complex problems; and Scurrah2/ in his review of Chai's discussion of the planning of education for a rural society3/ is likewise concerned that the educational planner does not collect faulty information leading to so-called solutions that actually do not even address themselves to the 'real' problem areas. Benoit, too, points to the matter of uncertainty in the identification of the 'real' issues in his note on the decision-making processes in the politics of education4/, while McKinnon asserts that "the frequency with which plans are rejected implies that often planners do not address themselves to the 'right' problems....5/. But there is also another drawback about the scientific approach to problem-solving, which can perhaps be best identified by focussing the discussion for a time on the general nature of any scientific activity.

IV. 'THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD' AND THE NATURE OF REALITY

What is perhaps the most striking feature about such activity is the distinction which exists between the scientist and the object of his study. The physicist, for example, who contemplates his electrons, is undoubtedly himself made up of molecules, atoms and electrons, but in his role as an experimental physicist, he regards this world of electrons with a detached equanimity. For him this world of electrons, the natural world, is an object world - a world which exists quite independently of him and of the processes through which he seeks to study and explain it. It is an intrinsically meaningless world, and the physicist is at liberty to regard it in any way he pleases, according to his purely cognitive concerns. Such concerns are of course dictated by the various constructs of the model of physical reality that he has developed, constructs which, it must be noted, not only display an eminently logical consistency within the framework of that model, but are also securely based in the sense data of the natural world, so that they can be referred to it by means of observation of and, hence, enable the model to be verified. Such verification, however, implies the possibility of measurement, and so the natural scientist must strive to develop such measuring instruments and techniques as will provide him with the numerical data that is to serve as the operational counterpart of his model. With such instruments and techniques the scientist can collect what he calls 'facts', that is information about certain regularities, which, though they can never really be understood by him, can nevertheless be explained in terms of the laws which may be deduced from his model if the assumptions on which his model is based, are acceptable to and accepted by his scientific colleagues. The quest for such explanations, then, is the real crux of all operations in the natural sciences, familiar operations

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1/ Rowley, C.K. Politics of educational planning in developing countries, Paris/Unesco/IIEP, 1971.
2/ Scurrah, M.B. Review, Vol.1, No.1, May 1974. (Educational Planning).
3/ Chai Hom-Chan, Planning education for a rural society, Paris/Unesco/IIEP, 1971.
4/ Benoit, A. A note on the decision-making process in the politics of education, Comparative education review, Vol.19, No.1 Feb. 1975, pp.155-169.
5/ McKinnon, K.K. Realistic educational planning, Paris/Unesco/IIEP, 1973, p.11.

such as concept formation, theory building, and testing, and causal explanation, and operations which, of course, make sense, because they are linked directly both to the constructs of the model and to identifiable, overt phenomena in the real physical world.

Now historically the social sciences have been closely identified with the natural scientific tradition. For studies in the social sciences were inaugurated during the nineteenth century, when the triumphant achievements of natural science were being heralded and in an intellectual milieu that was likewise imbued with the empiricist and materialist philosophies that have provided modern science with its methodological underpinnings. Hence, if only to gain some scientific respectability as an intellectual discipline it became increasingly necessary for each of the social sciences to throw off the metaphysical speculation, the introspection, the armchair philosophizing with which the study of man had so long been schackled, and to move from the individual and the unique by way of hypothesis, experiment, and datum, to those general perhaps even universal laws on which social prediction might be based.

Not only that, such social scientific activity was becoming increasingly urgent in view of the fact that this new rational, almost self-evident approach to the appraisal of reality that modern science represented, had seriously undermined the traditional view of the world. This was a world-view which located the place and the purpose of man within a comprehensive divine plan. The development of the Christian culture had literally made the concerns of heaven and earth as one, "a divine and dependable order". And to give substance to this point it is pertinent to draw attention to the reaction of the Neapolitans, or rather perhaps it would be more true to say, of a very small percentage of them, who, fearing that they too would fall victims to the earthquakes that have recently ravaged northern Italy were reported to be praying very hard that the dried blood of St. Januarius would thicken and run liquid again, as a good omen: a caricature perhaps, but also a vestige of the mediaeval theistic world view. Such a view of the world accommodated the feudal order, the order of the church, and the empire, and the order of the heavenly bodies, in a gracious schema that was accepted as the very reflection of the order of the Kingdom of Heaven itself! As Butterfield once put it so well, the development of positive science, with its law of inertia and theory of motion, drove out "the spirits of the world and opened the way to a universe that ran like a piece of clockwork". 1/ This was a universe that could be scientifically formulated and explained, a universe in which God and the Angels (and the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius) were really no longer needed!

Furthermore, just as the basic presumption of modern science that the principles of the world lie exclusively within the world, has encouraged a sort of metaphysical ennui, so has it impelled man himself to become the principle of order in the world, to take the destiny of the world into his own hands because there is no Other, and thus, (in case the reader should think that the foregoing passages represent little more than a somewhat aimless and grandoise diversion), to plan! In fact has been claimed that in his century governments were so impressed by the accomplishments of scientific research in the various fields on which such an emphasis was placed during the war, that they turned their attention to policies which would maintain the same high standard in their peace-time activities. This development in government policies for the promotion of science, it is suggested

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1/ Butterfield, H. The origins of modern science, 1300-1800, London, O.U.P. 1951.

formed part of the movement of ideas which looked to the development of 'science-based' industry, and which it might be added endorsed science-based industrial management!

At this point the transition to the idea of a 'science-based society' was an easy one; an idea which, of course, was very much part of the Marxian revolutionary utopianism, but one which has developed in those countries where such is not the prevailing ideology, not as a revolutionary utopianism, but rather as a progressivistic, rationalistic, scientistic utopianism in which the ideal is to achieve as problemless and fully gratified a society as possible upon the successful application of scientific knowledge. It is pertinent to note here that Lasswell, one of the pioneers of the new discipline 'policy sciences' which is specifically concerned "with the contributions of systematic knowledge, structured rationality, and organised creativity to better policymaking", 1/ has nonetheless freely acknowledged that the attempt at sustained orientation, that is, the attempt in policy sciences methodology to specify the institutional pattern from which we are moving and the pattern toward which we are going, with a view to improving public policymaking, owes something to Marxian world historic scholarship. He does emphasize though contrary to what has been suggested above that such a "development construct" is not to be regarded as being concerned with Utopian visions. Rather the idea is to make, through the use of the 'developmental construct', a tentative and exploratory exploration of future specifications which are based in trends that have actually been observed, and not in fantasy.

However, for all that, there would appear to be every indication that if the methodology of the 'policy sciences', considered in the narrow sense of the word as the manipulation of a set of given research techniques, is not inspired by utopianism, then the concepts and assumptions underlying such scientific inquiry in the cause of better public policy-making, to which cause it should be emphasized educational planning is also committed, are in essence utopian. It has already been experienced that even the very technological interventions through which man has sought to achieve greater control of nature, can in themselves constitute a new kind of danger for him. But such indications are not thought of as any reason for despair! On the contrary they have been accepted, by policy scientists in particular, as a challenge to renewed efforts at rationalization - at planning - not just the control and direction of the environment, but, necessarily, the control and direction of society and individuals, and then the control and direction of the environment, society, and individual-controlling and-directing activities, that is, at planning meta-direction and meta control. 2/

But on what basis? There undeniably has developed in the social sciences, a most respectable school of thought, which, to take a polar position for the sake of simplicity and clarity, is adamant that it is the methods of the natural sciences which have yielded significant results as far as the development of mankind is concerned, and which if applied properly and in their entirety will yet mark that triumph of rationality: "a world in which we can choose and control matters that affect our lives." 3/

1/ Dror, Y., Design for policy sciences, New York : Elsevier, 1971. Preface.

2/ Dror, Y. ibid p.4.

3/ Bell, D. The end of ideology, New York. The Free Press, 1960.

But who is to do this choosing, and again on what basis? Let us consider this question briefly but explicitly in the context of educational planning.

It has already been noted that it is one of the functions of the planner to provide the educational administrator with "useful information", but what constitutes useful information for a "rational scientific approach" to the solving of problems in the educational sphere? In the first place it must be empirically valid information, but, as it is difficult to justify the ethics of conducting experiments in the educational field, whether it be in the laboratory, or outside of it, that is in so far as the experimentation may be even potentially harmful to any of the human subjects involved, survey research is most often resorted to. Such research is regarded as providing a particularly useful source of information in those countries where development programmes have suffered simply because there really is extant no reliable estimate of how many people there are in the country, much less the number of school going age, not to mention the appropriate estimates on which to base the projection of sectoral outputs, or input-output coefficients, or the calculation of marginal rather than average costs and returns!

Without digressing into a dissertation on the debilitating effort on the effectiveness of planning techniques from the simplest to the most sophisticated - of the poor quality of the data, a matter which has already been dealt with very competently elsewhere, one point which is perhaps most basic and not often recognized is, that ordinary survey techniques may not be well suited to those different physical and cultural conditions which prevail in the so-called developing countries. For thirty years there has been an explosive development of 'official statistics', in social survey, field work practice interviewing, sampling, data processing, and the like, but it is claimed in some academic circles that the importation of western developed social science theories and research techniques, without any real attempt being made at adaptation to the new environment, represents a form of 'scientific colonialism'. 1/ These are strong words, and perhaps those who engage in educational planning are not guilty of the charge.

But it is not only the foreign scholar who is necessarily insensitive to the complexity of meanings associated with many vital terms and concepts in the language of the country he is seeking to assist. The indigenous educational planner, if he comes from a different ethnic and social background, and/or is hidden away in the hierarchy of a mega-ministry, is not much more likely to have access to the community which he thinks he serves. And even if he does personally make contact with such groups in an effort to really plan in their interests, his good intentions may well be misunderstood. He still represents the long arm of the government, which is perceived perhaps as trying to assess the numerical strength of a tribal group in which case the numbers reported are increased; or which, on the other hand could be seeking to levy more taxes, in which case the numbers admitted to may be considerably less. 2/ Hence, in a sense, both the foreign expert and the man from the ministry are 'outsiders' and thus will have difficulty, albeit to different degrees, in determining what really are the constraints critical to development in a specific situation, and how feasible it

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1/ See, for example, O'Barr, M. et.al, Survey research in Africa : its application and limits, Evanston: Northwestern Uni. Press, 1973.

2/ See, for example, Adesina Segun, Constraints on educational planning and development: The case of Nigeria, in Educational Planning, Vol.1, No.2. October 1974.

really is to attempt to remove these constraints given the existing manpower or institutional development. That is, of course, if the government whom the planner represents is really committed to doing anything at all in the first place!

Undoubtedly, this critique of educational planning as a 'rational scientific' approach to problem solving, could be continued at great length. Are there concepts which can be quanticized, measuring instruments which can be developed, hypotheses which can be tested, film theories which can be developed, and in the long run information produced which is useful, because it is information about regularities in the social world which it is assumed will run like clockwork if only the key can be found? But an assessment of educational planning in these terms is not the purpose of this paper.

Rather, it is to point to a second school of social science thought, which does not adhere to those assumptions about the nature of the social world that a 'rational, scientific approach' to problem solving implies, and so maintains that the social world is not a system of things of which man is but one, a little more complicated perhaps but nevertheless fully amenable to the methods of science. Such a school of thought prefers rather to emphasize that man is essentially a subject not an object, that he is, as it were, a first person event and not a third person event. It asserts that man is not merely a part of the world but also an originator of meaning and value in the world. In fact it maintains that the world of objectivity can only present itself as such, just because man is not simply an object but also a subject. According to this school of thought, then, the social world is not a world of objects which can be examined, manipulated and planned externally and at will, but rather an existential product of human activity sustained and changed by such activity, which can only be understood within the schema of human motives, human ends and human planning - in short - within the categories of human action. 1/

This is not a world, then, which the planner can regard with a detached equanimity. It is not a world from which he can stand aside, because it is in reality a system of relations and interests in which he too is enmeshed. He is, in actual fact, not just an economist, or a statistician contemplating his budgets or his printouts in splendid isolation, but, in reality a human being pondering other human beings, who have their own hopes, their own fears, their conflicts of interests and their motives, and hence whose destinies cannot really be determined beforehand, and regulated by the Almighty Hand of the Planner, (it is Wildavsky's idea that if planning is to be anything perhaps to think in theological terms may be more appropriate!) 2/ and who perhaps, after all, cannot really be endowed with just that kind of knowledge that in the planner's judgment they will need to perform just that kind of job for which they were brought into this scientific world! This is not meant to be a caricature of the planner's task, nor should it be misinterpreted as a lack of commitment to planning.

1/ For a simple introduction to thinking in this areas the following text may prove valuable:
Filmer, P. et al. New directions in sociological theory, London, Collier-Macmillan, 1972.

2/ Wildavsky, A. op. cit.

Rather it has been written to throw into sharper relief what would appear to be a more appropriate conception of that ask, namely, a conception of educational planning which assumes not a scientific but a human rationality, with an existentialist commitment to subjectivity, and a concern with the planner's reflection upon the forms and dimensions of his own typically human experience as a subject incarnate in a world with other people.

And if this should seem at worst a real flight from reason into philosophical subjectivism, if not just a glorification of sheet relativism or arbitrariness, and at best the sort of thing a planner might read with his feet up before he really got on with the job in hand it is probably worthwhile to note that such a point of view has already found expression in Adam Curle's personal case study of planning for education in Pakistan. Not in so many words perhaps, but here is what he wrote:

> "Our sureness of touch in educational planning is, however, limited: we do not know enough about the contribution of education to economic growth. Our techniques, compared with those of the economist are rudimentary - and so in fact are his when dealing with education. We rely excessively on the subjectivity of our own limited experience. Nevertheless, when we write up our work, we appear as Olympian figures who looked down, aloofly objective, and saw the truth. In the present state of our ignorance I maintain that we owe it to our subject to describe the circumstances, personal, social and political, in which our perceptions matured; the stresses which impelled us to particular decisions; the doubts and ignorance masked by a false show of certainty. We should show how it came about that we adopted a second-best solution - and then we should ask whether the best solution possible, is not, tout court, the best solution: that is to say, we should question whether there can be an ideal plan apart from one created out of the pressures which affect all administration."1/

And Coombs has commended him for what he has likewise described as a "personal approach (which) represents a creative and courageous technique consistent with the highest tenets of good scholarship".2/

V. HUMAN RATIONALITY OR THE RATIONALITY OF THE SOCIAL WORLD

It is intended now to attempt to spell out the implications of this existentialist view of man as the centre of indetermination, as the source of meaning and value, as the creator of history, for the concept of human rationality, or the rationality of the social world. Certainly the procedural aspect of the definition of scientific rationality still holds as much as it ever did, and perhaps even more so, because if man is no longer viewed as being inexorably linked to any set of events, then he is really free as it were to take the means to ends, and by virtue of his contingency, has the freedom to create the future. But the nature of the knowledge elements for the humanly rational act differs considerably from those elements required for the scientifically rational act.3/

1/ Curle, A. Planning for education in Pakistan : A personal case study, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard Uni. Press, 1966, pp. XV-XVI

2/ Coombs, Philip H., in Curle A., ibid, p. xii.

3/ Again this discussion draws on the work of Schuetz, A., op. cit.

In the first place the planner, or simply any man who wishes to act in a humanly rational way, must not only know the place of the end to be realized within the framework of his own plans (which must be known by him too), but also the place of the end to be realized within the framework of the plans of all of the other actors involved. He must, in addition, be aware of the interrelations of his own ends, with the other ends he wishes to pursue, their compatibility or incompatibility, and likewise the interrelations of the ends of his plans, with all those other ends entertained by all those others whom his plans may or are actually designed to affect. Furthermore, he must attempt to foresee the desirable and undesirable consequences which may arise as the by-product of the realization of his main end, and also as the by-product of the realization of the main ends of others. Then there is the question of means. The planner, as one social actor among many, must also take cognizance of the different chains of means which technically, or even ontologically, are suitable for the accomplishment of his end, regardless of whether he has control of all or several of their elements. It is interesting to note in this context, that although ideological and utopian thought are regarded as a form of non-bounded reason, such responses to human problems as are made on the basis of tradition, intuition, wisdom or creativity are described as extra-rational.1/ It is little wonder then that the notion of creative thinking is fairly foreign to the traditional educational planner, unless, of course, his approach to this task has been influenced by 'alternative future thinking', which endorses creative thinking simply because it too shares the existentialist viewpoint that has been outlined in this paper, and, thus, rejecting any deterministic assumptions about the future, takes the position that man can and does create the future's major elements.2/

However, the man who acts with a human rationality does not only need to bring his own creative capacities to bear on the question of what means to pursue, but must also allow for, if not actively encourage the creativeness of others in this respect. Furthermore if he is to act with a human and not just a scientific rationality, he needs some idea of how such means, those devised by himself and others, interfere with other ends and chains of means, their secondary effects and incidental consequences. Finally, the planner and all the other actors involved must have some knowledge of which means lie within reach and which might be pursued. But the analysis of the rational act in the social world cannot end here, for there are another two important elements (and indeed there may be others which this analysis has failed to recognize) which must be emphasized:

- The interpretation or misinterpretation of the planner's act by all the other actors involved, and vice versa; and
- their reaction to the planner's act and their motivation to oppose or endorse it.

1/ Friedmann, J. A conceptual model for the analysis of planning behaviour, in Administrative Science Quarterly, September 1967, pp. 237-238.

2/ Soroos, M.S. A methodological overview of the process of designing alternative future worlds, in Beres, L.R. et al. op. cit. p. 8.

VI. HOW CAN EDUCATIONAL PLANNING THEN BE RATIONAL?

It is probably quite clear to the reader by now that the question posed by the title of this paper was not at all facetious. If planning is to proceed from the assumption of human, rather than scientific rationality, then the task becomes considerably more involved than that of just searching for some more or less appropriate tool in the economist's kit-bag. What such a task would constitute in its entirety is not within the compass of this paper to explore, but in an attempt to give some substance to the ideas expressed here it is intended to examine the methodological implications of at least the first element of knowledge required for the humanly rational act as it has been outlined above. It will be recalled that this element was, that in the very first place, the planner must not only know the place of the end to be realised within the framework of his own plans, but also the place of the end to be realized within the framework of the plans of all the other actors involved. For the sake of the argument and by way of an allegory1/ let us imagine that the planner belongs to a state in a certain country, which state from its earliest days as a colony, has been closely concerned with education, and which did not relinquish its powers over education when a federation of states was formed. Not that the state initially assumed control of the administration. That was left first to non-government bodies, and then was shared by both government and non-government bodies, until the state finally assumed control of all state-supported schools, first through the establishment of a Council of Education, and then later with the creation of a Department of Public Instruction.

This Department, now known as the Department of Education, is where our planner works. Now the Minister of Education and the senior officers of the Department have been thinking that perhaps it would be a good idea to allow for a little more community participation in the running of the state's schools. To be sure the decentralization of the administration of the Department has been in progress for nearly thirty years, but this establishment of regional offices was more in the interests of administrative efficiency than community involvement in school management. Why these officers and the Minister should be interested in promoting the notion of community involvement in the running of the schools at this point of time need not concern us as yet, though their ideas about what form such a scheme should take, are pertinent. Among themselves they are thinking in terms of a state or head office that would be responsible for broad statements of policy, funding in the governmental sense, planning research and curriculum. This would mean that there would need to be offices at the regional level for the provision of such professional and administrative services as the employment of teachers, their placement, promotion and transfer within the region. In this scheme of things then the schools might elect councils, which could help to manage school property, develop policies and forward planning associated with school finances, and so on.

1/ It will be clear to the informed reader that much of what is written here to provide a working context for the planner reflects aspects of the educational system in an Australian State. However, because it is proposed to provide only the barest outline, and to adjust the account of the situation that prevails in that state to illustrate certain points of the argument more clearly, the actual state will not be identified.

These ideas, however, though they might provide the planner with some guidelines for his task are still very much just what the Ministers and the Directors General are thinking about the proposal intuitively, or on the basis of their wisdom and experience, and hence they wish the planner to approach the problem systematically, rationally and perhaps even creatively and provide them with a firm proposal which can then be presented to Cabinet for approval. Given this task then, what does the planner do, if his planning methodology is to be informed by that first element of knowledge necessary to the humanly rational act?

What a consideration of human rationality in the planning exercise would immediately underscore is that the planner's task is, first and foremost, an organizational one. Hence the way the planner carries out his task is likely to be affected by the difficulties he has in working with Mr. X. 1/ or constrained by the organizational resources he has at his disposal, such as time, support staff or secretarial help, and, it must also be emphasized, the degree of commitment he brings to any one of the tasks the organisation sets him.

For, our planner is an organizational man, and without digressing into a critique of the literature on the behaviour of man in the organizational context, or of that which deals with the fate of the individual in the large, complex organization, it should be emphasized that organizational man may regard his organizational task very differently depending on what his overall plans for "the good life" are. A brief resumé of the theory of Presthus at this stage should illustrate this point nicely, for he has proposed that organizational man accommodates rationally to organizational demands in at least three distinct ways, depending on what overall plans he has.

Hence, according to Presthus, the commitment which our planner brings to his task may vary from the complete dedication of "the upward mobile" who perceives that a real future for him lies with the organization; through the uncertainty of "the ambivalent" who is less committed to the ends of the organization than he is to his professional interests; to the unconcern of the "indifferent", who though he may arrive on time each day, and not leave the office before he is supposed to, is, in actual fact, much more concerned to build his chicken coup, or grow prize roses, than plan education! 2/

Within the context of the discussion on human rationality, and from the Presthus's point of view, then, it might be said that the upward mobile is behaving rationally in working hard at his task, because his end is to reap the organizational rewards of a bigger salary, better office, larger expense account, longer vacation, and perhaps a title on his door! To this end, too, he is likely to make the effort to get on well with his superordinates, and, if the occasion arises will be prepared to submit his professional viewpoint to their judgement.

This is what the ambivalent finds hard to do. He too would really like to succeed in the organization but just cannot bring himself to play the "organizational game". Authority irks him, and the only real solace in his organizational life is the friendship of his professional associates. His commitment to the organizational task certainly cannot be guaranteed.

The indifferent on the other hand is fundamentally just not interested either in the rewards that the organizational race for advancement might offer, nor in the organizational task. He simply has other more rewarding things to think about.

1/ Curle, A. op.cit.
2/ Presthus, R. The organizational society, New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1962.

Hence it is clear that in terms of human rationality the planner's task can never rightly be considered as a purely technical one. It is, in, and of itself, an organizational task, an end to be realized within the framework of the planner's own organizational ends. And there are other actors involved with other ends. 1/

For example, what of the politician - the Minister, who from the account given above has, in concert with senior members of the department, initiated the task? He is obviously interested in the proposal, but why? How does the achievement of some legislation on this issue fit into his scheme of things? Obviously he wants to retain his portfolio, or obtain a more prestigious one. Obviously he wants his party to retain the government. Perhaps he is under unwelcome pressure to bring about a reduction in educational expenditure, and sees expanded community participation in the running of the schools as a means to this end. Or it could be that he sees in the notion of increased local autonomy for schools, a means of reducing the occurrence of those parental demonstrations that have been embarrassing the government for several months? Or perhaps the idea appeals to the Minister as a strategy for bringing the powerful teachers' union to heel, because community involvement might so focus the attention of teachers on local issues, that the cohesion and strength of that agressive statewide body will be debilitated. It could even be that he is not really interested in any legislation of the sort he is discussing but has some completely different scheme in view and is just preparing the right political climate for it, by way of a debate about the community involvement issue. It could provide a good smoke screen for his real political intentions, which will be revealed only when it is too late to change the course of events. It may be a plan, too, which the planner has been directed to prepare, not for implementation, but to give the general impression, perhaps both within the department and outside it, that this Minister is really doing something, when in fact nothing is being done or likely to be done, at least on that score. How Machiavellian the politician appears to be, and how really difficult it might be to determine how the community involvement proposal does in fact fit with the politician's real end-in-view. But if our planner does not do the best he can to know what the politician's interests in the scheme are, and to account for them in his proposal, not only has he failed to act with a human rationality, but because of that, his carefully worked out proposal is likely to just gather dust on the office shelf!

Nor must it be forgotten that the planner is only a member of one small division in the Department, yet what he is about to plan could threaten the extinction of some divisions at the head office level, and greatly enhance the power and control of certain officers in provincial centres. What he is engaged in then is not only the planning of an administrative reform, but within that context, he is initiating a political development involving the transfer of control and power, which will be expressed in a new development setting. How does a planner proceed with a human rationality in this case?

1/ Coleman has already made this point in his discussion of the design of research in social policy. His postulation of this design, however, does not proceed explicitly from the premise of human rationality. See Coleman, J.S., Policy research in the social sciences, Morristown, N.J. General Learning Press, 1972.

Again, he must seek t. determine what the notion of community involvement means in the administrators' scheme of things. And here, because the planner has been left very much to his own devices to determine how he might ascertain what the politician's interests are, though the informal "grape-vine" network would immediately suggest itself as a useful source of information in this respect, it may serve to enhance the discussion if a strategy is outlined which would enable the planner to act in a humanly rational fashion as far as the administrators are concerned.

This strategy it should be noted is based on a new development in organizational theory which adopts much the same view of the nature of social reality, as that which has already been proposed in this paper as more tenable than the scientific view as far as the process of educational planning is concerned. Thus where traditional organizational analysis with its dominant positions of the bureaucracy, systems theory, and the human relations school, has reified the organization to an abstraction which exists apart from the people in it, the alternative view maintains that there is not an abstraction called organisation, but rather varied perceptions by individuals of what they can, should or must do in their dealings with others. 1/ If organisations, then, "are viewed as emergent negotiated definitions of relationships and legitimised patterns of action"2/, organizational change requires a concept of an evolving social order based in modified definitions by individuals of what they can, should or must do, or in the definition of new patterns. This does not mean that the planner can get on with the job of administrative reform that the new proposal for community involvement might entail by going to his desk and drawing up the design for the new or modified patterns of relationships. On the contrary it is at the heart of this new development in organisational theory that these patterns of relationships are mutually defined. It is this need for mutual definition of the modified or new patterns of relationships which any administrative reform entails that provides the key to the strategy that the planner might adopt if he wishes to act with a human rationality.

In the first place the new mission of the head office or of the regional offices needs to be defined not by the planner alone, but by a small core group of administrators who are interested in the proposal, can identify what it is in the nature of the existing administrative structure that is inimical to community involvement in the schools, why this is so, and what might be done about it. Such a group will not only provide the planner with new insights and psychological support, but, and, this is most important, also will provide him with a basis for collective action in the event of the proposal becoming law. In a sense then implementation has already begun. This core group should then develop a defensible conceptualization of the new structure, and work out their own strategies for recruiting support for such a conceptualization. This is also essentially a political task, but it should allow the planner to articulate not only a comprehensive and feasible setting, but also to secure administrative support for such a setting if and when it is legitimized. And, of course, in acting with human rationality he must weigh the merits of creating what could become a powerful administrative

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1/ Levin, M.A. et.al. From ideal to real: understanding the development of new educational settings. Interchange, Vol.5 No.3. 1974, p.45.

2/ This view of the organization actually has it basis in the work of Schutz one aspect of which has been referred to earlier in this paper. It is also related to the work of Cyert and March (1963) and Simon (1964).

pressure group for community involvement in schools against his perception of what it really is that the Minister and senior members of the Department are after, though perhaps it is simplifying the discussion a little to assume that the aims and interests of these two actors will necessarily coincide!

There are other actors too who, with their aims and interests, must be taken into account; teachers and principals, parents and children. One of the general ends of both teachers and principals may be taken to be the retention of their professional image, with the right to discretion and autonomy that this affords them. How then are they likely to regard the notion of community involvement - as a threat, or a benefit? Moreover, are the parents and members of local communities really interested in such an idea, or is community involvement, however planned, only going to institutionalise the power and control already exerted in the local context by an élite with vested interests. It is unlikely that the planner would be in a position to employ with all these actors the dialectical process that has been described as an appropriate strategy for his work with the administrative group, so he must choose means to this end of getting to know what the interests of the other actors are! Hence the model for human rationality outlined above grows still more complicated, because even in discerning the place of the end within the framework of all the actors involved, the planner must choose the appropriate means! And then his task is still only just began!

It is clear, then, from this brief sketch, that planning proceeding on the assumption of human rationality, is as much an ideal as the scientific rationality of the traditional planning model. However, it can be said that if the planning process only strives after this ideal it will have fulfilled its function. And in terms of the foregoing discussion what might be conceived now as the function of the planning process as far as the administration of education is concerned? It is perhaps to carry the human rationality that characterizes such administration just a little bit closer to the ideal of human rationality that has been outlined in this paper.

VII. CONCLUSION

What then has this paper achieved? It has taken up an issue that is currently being debated in the educational planning literature, but has bothered students of public policy-making for quite some time: namely the adequacy of the central assumption of rationality in the formulation of public policy-planning. It has striven to give this debate a new dimension, by attempting to identify the nature of the rationality that is being called into question, and rephrasing the debate in terms of the tenability of an assumption of scientific rationality as opposed to human rationality, or the rationality of the social world. It has attempted to give some indication as to the general nature of a planning model proceeding from this assumption. No quantitative or economic element has entered into the discussion, though it is asserted that such elements fall readily into place under the "means" aspect of the human rationality model as it has been outlined in this paper. For it seems that the crux of the debate does not lie in a change of perspective - from rational comprehensive analysis to incremental decision-making - or from a rational model to an organizational or political model. But rather, that it is a matter of attempting to find out what human rationality is all about, and realizing that scientific rationality is after all only one aspect of human rationality, and an aspect that needs from time to time to be put into proper perspective. That is what this paper has tried to begin to do in the interests of the educational planning process.

Conclusion

But then the Ph.D. in The Firebugs described in the introduction to this paper is a pathetic figure. He thinks something - but he does nothing, nothing at least until it is too late. Amid the screeching of sirens, the howling of dogs, the tolling of bells and the roaring of the flames, he reads an academic paper! Perhaps in the educational planning world where schools need to be built, teachers need to be trained, relevant curricula need to be designed, implemented and evaluated, jobs for school leavers need to be found, and the professional or skilled manpower necessary for economic development needs to be provided, the consideration of a purely theoretical issue might be tantamount to reading a paper on the subject of why the house is burning while it is burning! No-one can gainsay the urgency of the educational planner's tasks, and no-one probably feels more frustrated than he when his plans are not accepted, or, if accepted, for some reason or other do not appear to work quite so well as he might have hoped. Yet this in a sense is what this paper is all about: the attempt to make planning really effective, really rational - not with a scientific rationality that denies the social world its true character, but with a human rationality, which it is postulated could become the central assumption of educational planning to its greater success.

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OCCASIONAL PAPER No. 45: There is some evidence in the literature on educational planning that that central assumption of educational planning, namely rationality, is now being called into question. It has been suggested that such an assumption is inadequate, even outmoded. This paper takes up the debate, and attempts to contribute to the development of thinking in the educational planning field by analysing the nature of that rationality which, it is contended, is both adequate and opportune for educational planners to assume.

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